

September 7, 2004

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"It will be found an unjust and unwise jealousy to deprive a man of his natural liberty upon the supposition he may abuse it." --- Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) British Lord General of the Army, Lord Protector of the Realm Source: Address, First Protectorate Parliament, 1654

UNDER THE DOME

On the Governor's Desk

The last weeks of legislative session sent some 800 bills to Governor Schwarzenegger. This number is a bit lower than average, but the interest-level is a bit higher than average. All of the interest groups, from the tax-and-spenders to the cut-and-slashers, are watching the Governor's writing hand because he either signs a bill into law or signs a veto message. Everyone is curious about just where the Governor stands on issues big and small.

One litmus test is in a series of controversial bills on social issues. Among them are:

A.B. 358 calls on California to implement the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This is an attempt by radical feminists to eliminate the unique distinctions between male and female and could result in unisex bathrooms in schools and the elimination of women-only health clubs.

A.B. 1520, though amended, has as its intent the creation of memorials for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender veterans. There is no need to sexualize the military or our honoring of the sacrifice made by those who serve this country. We should honor their service and patriotism, not focus on their sexual activity.

A.B. 1918 undermines marriage by having schools teach that "domestic partners" are the equivalent of husbands and wives.

A.B. 2208 would require insurance companies to provide registered domestic partners with coverage equal to that provided to spouses.

From now until the deadline of midnight September 30th, the fight is on for the Governor's heart, mind and writing hand.

*****More Boards to Cut*****

Today I continue with the list of 117 boards, commissions, committees and bureaus recommended for elimination by the Governor's California Performance Review team. Keep in mind that some of the people appointed to these bodies have salaries of more than \$100,000 per year, even though they meet only a few times per year. And even though some of these are ostensibly oversight bodies, there is no line of accountability to elected officials for their work.

The list continues: Agricultural and Cooperative Bargaining Advisory Committee; Apprenticeship Council; Commission of the Californians; Commission for Economic Development; Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation; Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities; Employment Training Panel; Fair Employment and Housing Commission; Industrial Welfare Commission; Occupational Safety and Health Appeals Board and Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board; Rehabilitation Appeals Board; Small Business Board; Small Business Reform Task Force; Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board and Workers' Compensation Appeals Board.

ISSUE FOCUS

*****The Changing Conventions of Conventions*****

American national political conventions have changed much over their history. They are now clearly four night television miniseries. Every item is designed for the eyes and ears of the TV audience. The networks are jealous that they cannot control the miniseries so more and more they attempt to counter-program, but millions of cable and satellite subscribers are using other channels to watch more of the conventions. I particularly commend the Cal-Channel, which broadcasts California legislative activities, for its complete transmission of the Republican convention's video feed.

The challenge that faces the national parties is that conventions have two contradictory goals. The first is to energize and appeal to their base. That is like a TV miniseries that is really only enjoyed if you have already read the book on which the show is based. Only people who were fans of the book watch the televised version. But appealing to a party's base is so easy and so much fun that both parties do it very well. Red meat for the partisans.

The second goal may be even more important: persuade undecided voters to support your candidate. Recent surveys estimate undecided voters are 3-13% of the voting population. The partisans are so evenly divided in the target states (remember, it's an Electoral College decision, not a popularity contest), that the undecideds will determine the outcome again. Given that 106 million people voted four years ago and rounding up, it means that the recent conventions sought to reach only 4 to 14 million people out of the

294 million Americans. Actually, the number is smaller since the population in the 23 target states is much less than half of the nation's voters. So, with Labor Day being the traditional kickoff for electioneering, candidates are looking to appeal to 7 million American likely voters in a select number of states. The rest of us are taken for granted, as we should be.

So if you liked your party's convention and thought that it really kicked the other side, then you are a partisan whose only role now is to volunteer to help your candidate since your vote is a given. On the other hand, if you thought the conventions were too partisan, but you appreciated those speakers who addressed issues you cared about without sniping or sneering, then you are an undecided. If you also live in one of those toss-up states, then Bush and Kerry would like your phone number so that they can call you.

*****Edelweiss Memories*****

Governor Schwarzenegger is being hit with a cheap shot by the liberal press. They are saying he made up his memories of life in Austria under socialism. The so-called experts say that Austria was not socialist in the 1960s. I am not an expert on the economic history of Austria, but I am willing to bet any of these "experts" that they are wrong. Socialism is a government controlled central economic planning system where the government owns the country's productive industries. Most European countries retained ownership of the economy in the aftermath of the National Socialism of the Nazis and the advancing "people's" socialism of the communists. Typically, the government ran the telephone, telegraph and energy systems, including electricity, gas, and petroleum products. Mineral extraction, metal production, and even finished products like automobiles were run under government ownership. The government of Austria may have called itself conservative, but that word meant something very different in Europe in the 1960s than it does in America today. The Governor was insightful as a young man to recognize the harm that a centrally planned economy causes and saw America as the shining light that offered opportunity to everyone regardless of his or her status with the government.

ISSUE FOCUS

*****Citizenship Test 10*****

This week's questions touch on a myriad of U.S. history issues:

42. Who becomes President of the United State if the President and Vice-President should die?
43. Who is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court?
44. Can you name thirteen original states?
45. Who said, "Give me liberty or give me death"?
46. Which countries were our enemies in World War II?

BOE AND LEGISLATIVE DATES

September 8, 2004--- BOE meets in Sacramento

September 23, 2004 --- First mailing of sample ballots.

September 30, 2004 — Last Day for Governor to sign or veto bills passed by the Legislature before Sept. 1 and in his possession on or after Sept. 1 (Art. IV, Sec. 10(b)(2)).

October 2, 2004 — Bills enacted on or before this date take effect January 1, 2005 (Art. IV, Sec. 8(c)).

October 4, 2004 --- First day to mail out absentee ballots.

October 19, 2004 --- Last day to register to vote in November's General Election.

October 27, 2004 --- Last day to request an absentee ballot.

November 2, 2004 — General Election.

NOTABLE DATES/ HISTORY

September 7, 1907 --- Sutro's ornate Cliff House in San Francisco was destroyed by fire.

September 8, 1565 --- The first permanent settlement on what would be the U.S. formed in St. Augustine, Florida.

September 8, 1771 ---- Mission San Gabriel Archangel formed in California.

September 8, 1892 --- First appearance of "The Pledge of Allegiance" (in the Youth's Companion).

September 8, 1990 --- Ellis Island Historical Site opened.

September 9, 1776 --- Continental Congress renamed the "United Colonies," the "United States."

September 9, 1850 --- California became the 31st state of the Union.

September 10, 1813 --- The Americans defeated the British naval forces in the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812.

September 11, 1936 --- FDR dedicated Boulder Dam, now known as Hoover Dam.

September 11, 2001 --- The worst terrorist attack on American soil killed nearly 3,000 people when hijacked airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in western Pennsylvania. Consider that in the seven years of the American Revolution, we lost 4,435 in battle. The fight for freedom continues.

September 12, 1953 --- John F. Kennedy married Jacqueline Bouvier.

GENERAL TAX INFORMATION

For answers to your general tax questions, call the Board of Equalization information center. Customer service representatives are available to help you from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Pacific time, Monday through Friday (except state holidays).

Toll-free number: 800-400-7115
TDD service for the hearing impaired
TDD phones: 800-735-2929
Voice phones: 800-735-2922

To reach the Taxpayer Rights Advocate's office for assistance with any BOE issues, see <http://www.boe.ca.gov/tra/tra.htm>, or call toll-free 1-888-324-2798.

HOW TO CONTACT ME

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